

REMARKS

This response is submitted in reply to the Final Office Action mailed on November 22, 2005. Claims 1-16 and 32-36 are pending in the patent application. Claims 11-16 were previously withdrawn. Claim 1 has been amended. No new matter has been added by this response.

Claims 1-10 and 32-36 were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 6,642,483 to Luciano et al. ("Luciano") in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,093,861 to Graham ("Graham"). Applicants disagree with and traverse this rejection for the following reasons.

Claim 1, as amended, is directed to an apparatus for selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of the gaming machine. The apparatus includes a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms where each lock mechanism is associated with one of the plurality of physical areas. Each lock mechanism is physically movable between an unlocked and locked condition with respect to its associated area. The apparatus includes control circuitry including a processor operating under the control of a stored program and coupled to each of the lock mechanisms for controlling these mechanisms. A data storage and retrieval system is adapted to communicate with the processor and includes a storage medium for storing data including personal identification data and access authorization data indicative of the areas, if any, of the machine for which a person is authorized to access the areas. The apparatus includes a data input device coupled to the processor for inputting at least personal identification data identifying a person seeking access to an area on the machine. The processor responds to inputted personal identification data for operating one or more lock mechanisms in accordance with access authorization corresponding

to an identified person. The storage medium stores personal identification data and authorizes access by certain identified personnel to a plurality, but not all, of the physical areas. The processor causes the lock mechanisms of the physical areas to move to the unlocked position to allow access to those areas to which access is authorized . Thus, the claimed invention includes a gaming machine which electrically controls a plurality of the lock mechanisms associated with different physical areas of a gaming machine to enable or disable access to a plurality of those areas based on whether a person or persons are authorized to access those areas.

In the Final Office Action, the Patent Office states that *Luciano* teaches a plurality of electrically operable locks associated with areas of the gaming machines. As the Patent Office states, however, *Luciano* fails to teach or suggest the operation of the locks. The Patent Office therefore relies on *Graham* to remedy the deficiencies of *Luciano*. *Graham* is directed to a method of authenticating input data including user data and pin code data for an access control system. Applicants submit that the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose or suggest the subject matter of the claimed invention.

As stated above, *Luciano* discloses a lockable security cabinet for casino game controllers which includes multiple key locking doors and key operated control switches to allow access to specific areas and controls of the cabinet. The key locking doors are accessible by authorized persons having the proper key for each particular area or control switch on the cabinet. (See the Abstract). *Luciano* discloses that the locks may be cylinder type rotary key locks or electronic locks which use a code. (Col. 8, lines 18-21). *Luciano* therefore discloses a cabinet having a plurality of locking doors where each locking door requires a different key or different code to unlock and open those

areas. *Luciano* does not disclose, teach or suggest a single key which opens a plurality of the areas on the cabinet or that a plurality of the locking doors can be electrically opened by a single device, such as a processor.

Graham discloses a strike control relay 51 which receives signals from a microprocessor to control the opening and closing of an access device such as an electric lock. Therefore, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* teaches at best, that the independent locks of *Luciano* can each be independently and separately unlocked electrically by the microprocessor of *Graham*. *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest that the microprocessor or any other device can open a plurality of locks associated with access doors to different areas of a gaming machine or cabinet to allow access to those areas by an authorized person.

The combination of *Luciano* and *Graham*, therefore, does not disclose, teach or suggest an apparatus for selectively controlling access to a plurality of physical areas of a gaming machine including a plurality of electrically operable lock mechanisms which are unlocked by a processor to allow access to the physical areas by an authorized person as in the claimed invention. Accordingly, amended claim 1 and claims 2-10 which depend from claim 1, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

Claim 32 is directed to a method of selectively controlling access to a plurality of different physical areas of a gaming machine. Claim 32 is similar to claim 1 and includes electrically unlocking a plurality of lock mechanisms associated with physical areas for which a person seeking access is authorized to open. Thus, for the same reasons provided above for amended claim 1, the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of claim 32. Therefore, claim 32

and claims 33-36, which depend from claim 32, are each patentably distinguished over the combination of *Luciano* and *Graham* and in condition for allowance.

In light of the above, claims 1-10 and 32-36 are patentable over the art of record because the cited art does not disclose, teach or suggest the subject matter of the claimed invention. Accordingly, Applicants request that claims 1-10 and 32-26 be deemed allowable at this time and that a timely notice of allowance be issued in this case.

No fees are due. If any other fees are due in connection with this application, the Patent Office is authorized to deduct the fees from Deposit Account No. 19-1351. If such withdrawal is made, please indicate the attorney docket number (25814-403120) on the account statement.

Respectfully submitted,

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